

A Charaid Chòir,

Is mise Sarah Houston. 'S e tidsear bunsgoil a th' annam ann an Siorrachd Rois, is tha mi a' fuireach faisg air Caol Loch Aillse. Ach, am bliadhna seo, 's e oileanach GIfT a th' annam. Tha mac agam agus 's e sgoilear a th' ann aig Bun-sgoil a' Phluic; tha esan ag ionnsachadh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann an sin.

Seo mo bheachdan air a' Phlàna Cànain Nàiseanta Ghàidhlig 2017 – 2022.

Tha mi duilich ach, poignantly, feumaidh mi an sgrìobhadh airson a' mhòr chuid anns a' Bheurla a chionn 's nach eil mo chuid Ghàidhlig laidir no àrd gu leòr a radh is a sgrìobhadh, ceart is gu fileanta, a h-uile rud gum bi feum agam a radh - a dh' aindeoin a bhith air a' Ghàidhlig a dh'ionnsachadh, air a' chùrsa GIfT, fad am bliadhna acadaimigeach seo!

So, the four main issues I would like to see serious consideration given to are [in no particular order of priority] as follows:

- 1 **How to improve GME teacher recruitment and retention methodology – specifically in relation to routes for teachers wishing to make the transfer across from English Medium to Gaelic Medium.** The GIfT course has been a wonderful opportunity and experience, however, I cannot express strongly enough that in order for it to be a worthwhile course for teachers to undertake AND cost effective investment for Local Authorities and BnG, it MUST either:
  - a) recruit people who at entry must have already reached an upper intermediate level of Gaelic via An Cùrsa Adhartais, or equivalent; and / or
  - b) lobby Govt for funding to allow the GIfT course to be offered over two years and / or have a much greater focus on time spent learning Gaelic and less on Pedagogy – 2days face to face tuition per week across one academic year (minus the 8weeks spent on various placements) is simply not long enough to bring teachers from intermediate level [entry requirement for GIfT applicants] to a sufficiently comfortable and consolidated level of fluency and grammatical excellence to make them immediately useful additions to the GME workforce – **especially** for Primary School teachers of Early Years where total immersion methodology is of critical importance or High School teachers of very complex, wordy subjects such as History, Politics, Modern Studies, etc..
  
- 2 **Researching, developing and adapting the internationally successful Maori Language Nest \* model (Te Kohanga Reo) as a holistic, sustainable and grassroots, community-based method of Gaelic language and culture revitalisation thus offering a solution which, if piloted and adopted, could:**

a) successfully grow both the number of Gaelic learners and users – especially in the light of both i) the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and its provisions for the Gaelic medium primary education GMPE request process, and ii) the Scottish Government’s Blueprint for 2020 (Expansion of ELC in Scotland) – and, ultimately, could further improve the outcomes for GME;

b) offer parity of provision in GM Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) throughout Scotland;

c) fulfil many of the priorities and key commitments\*\* laid out in the Draft National Gaelic Language Plan (NGLP) 2017 – 2022.

\* [for a more detailed idea of what I am advocating with regard to Language Nests, please see the attached **Policy Brief: ‘Tog Neadan Chànain’.**]

\*\* For a detailed list of all the overlapping priorities and key commitments that would be met and / or fulfilled by the adoption of a Language Nest model of ELC, see attached document: **Appendix i.**

3 In specific response to Question 2 of the NGLP 17-22 Consultation: I agree that promoting a positive image of Gaelic is critically important; however, in order to build solid foundations and promote intergenerational transmission and domestic usage, I feel strongly that a further *explicit* priority for this area must be added, i.e.

✓ Promoting the importance of, and commitment to, Gaelic as a language to use within domestic and community settings.

4 In addition to the **Key Commitments – Using Gaelic** identified and listed in the **NGLP Consultation 2017 – 2022**, I believe that **there needs to be a further Key Commitment included or at least another initiative added to ‘Gaelic Overseas’**. That is: to build relations with the Maori Community in New Zealand and to engage in research of their successful language and culture revitalisation model, i.e. Te Kohanga Reo / Language Nests.

In keeping with the **Key Commitment to ‘Gaelic Overseas’**, this link with Maoris could be built as an initiative in collaboration with Ireland and Nova Scotia, i.e. to collaboratively research and build relations with Maoris in New Zealand to establish: i) how Te Kohanga Reo / Language Nests were developed; ii) how they work; iii) what makes them such a successful language and culture revitalisation model; iv) to identify best working principles and practices; v) how these can be creatively and successfully combined with best principles and practices from the respective GM ELC contexts to innovate a Language Nest model for piloting and development in the respective countries / regions, i.e. Scotland, Ireland and Nova Scotia then vi) to pilot and develop Language Nests simultaneously.

Tha mi an dòchas gu bheil na beachdan seo furasta agus soilleir gu leòr a thuigsinn. Please do not hesitate if you require any further information or clarification of any of the issues in this email or either of the attachments.

Best wishes for the next phase of the consultation process.

Le deagh dhùrachd

Sarah Houston